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(1875)

II. Part of a Letter from Mr Ralph Thoresby,
F. R. S. concerning Pewter Money, Coyn'd in Ire-
land, by the late King James.

Leeds, June 7. 1704.

Honoured Sir,

" This brings you an account of a Curiosity that relates to the late King James's Irish Moneys, which I am apt to think you never heard of, viz. a Crown piece of Pewter, inscribed *Melioris tessera fati*. 'Twas sent me by the Gentleman who found them in the Treasury at Dublin; whose account is so particular and curious, that I will choose to give it you in his own words. " That King James, having turned all the Brass Guns of " Ireland, and all the Brass and Copper Vessels of Pro- " testants that he could seize, into Coyn, viz. Half- " Crowns somewhat bigger than an English Half-penny, " Shillings broader, but not so thick as a Farthing, and " Six pences in proportion; it was order'd to pass cur- " rent in all Payments, even in Bonds, and discharge of " Judgments and Statutes; (insomuch that if Ages to " come knew not the reason, they would admire to be " told, that there was a time when men absconded, to " avoid receiving their Debts, as many here did;) But " these Stocks of Metal being all spent (which he began " to Coyn in June 1689. and no Circulation to bring " them back into his Treasury, he call'd in all that he " had Coyned, and the Half-Crowns, which before " were

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" were stamped with a Face, were re-stamped with his
" *Effigies* on Horseback, and then paid out to those who
" brought them in, as Crowns ; and the smaller, Coyns
" were melted down, and re-coyned again under the
" same Denominations, but with less Metal. After the
" turn was served by this Stratagem, he had not where-
" withal to import Copper and Brass ; but, for want of
" it, fell foul on the Pewter Dishes, &c.—And the
" piece I sent you of that Metal was Coyned for five
" Shillings ; and the Proclamation to make it passable
" was as ready as the Stamps, for it was prepared : But
" King *William* passing the *Boyne*, prevented their Pro-
" claiming it. There was very little of it Coyned, for
" our Government could meet with none of it ; until
" one day, rummaging all their Tinkerly Treasure, that
" they had left behind them in *Dublin* when they were
" routed, by accident I met with one Bag of 150 of those
" Pieces. So that the Piece I sent you, altho' it's of no Intrin-
" sick Value, it's a Rarity ; and had I thought it would
" have been acceptable, I would have sent you a Specimen
" of every sort that he had Coyned and Re-coyned
" here. I am,

Sir, Your very Humble Servant,

Dublin, Novemb.
the 27th, 1696.

Tho. Putland.

This Valuable Curiosity has the same Inscription on both sides, as the common Brass Crowns ; but there is this Legend added upon the Rim of it, *MELIORIS
TESSERA FATI A N N O R E G N I S E X T O.*